



# TOWN OF WELLS

*Wells, Maine*



## Meeting Minutes- FD & EMS Merger

**Date:** March 10, 2025, 3 PM

**Location:** Littlefield Meeting Room, Wells Town Hall

**Next Meeting:** April 14, 3 PM, Wells Town Hall

### Attendees:

- Jim Smith, Wells Select Board Member
- Tim Roche, Wells Select Board Member
- Mike Pardue, Wells Town Manager
- Brian Toomey, WEMS Board Chair
- Don Gonynor, WEMS Board Vice Chair
- Steve Merrill, WEMS Director
- Jonathan Gay, Wells Fire Department Assistant Chief & Paramedic
- Tyler Belanger, Wells Fire Department FF/EMT-A and President, IAFF Local 4652
- Eric Beaulieu, Wells Fire Department FF/ Paramedic
- Rebekah Kelley, Wells Public Information Officer

## 2. Updates from WEMS & Fire Department

### WEMS Report:

- WEMS currently has 50 personnel, with a few resignations.
- 32 paramedics are currently on staff.
- The WEMS budget was presented to the Budget Committee, which revealed some areas for growth in general knowledge of WEMS expenditure.

### Fire Department Report:

- Rumors circulating regarding the hiring of eight full-time personnel in July.
- Increased discussion within the fire service community regarding the merger.
- Public awareness of the merger is increasing.

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## 3. Communications & Messaging

### Review of Communications Efforts:

- Evaluating whether communication objectives are being met:
  - **Internal:** Meeting minutes, informational memos, and focus group updates.
  - **External:** Two newsletters summarizing progress (published February 1 and March 1).

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Wells, ME 04090



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## Next Steps for Communication:

- Create a **special edition WEMS/FD newsletter** for April.
    - Share census data illustrating the impact on public services and call volume.
    - Publish data on total WEMS and Fire Department annual calls.
    - Develop FAQs regarding WEMS's role in town.
  - **Seacoast Online** outreach
  - Consider including an **informational insert** in tax bills.
  - **Assistant Chief Gay** has compiled a spreadsheet blending Fire and EMS call data from recent years and will share it.
  - Monitor South Berwick's Fire/EMS consolidation efforts as a potential model.
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## 4. Vision Discussion

- **Jim Smith and Rebekah Kelley** will continue to refine the vision statement.
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## 5. Timeline Discussion:

Goal to present to the Board of Selectmen in **September 2025** (six-month planning period).

- **Phase 1:** Bringing WEMS under the Town's umbrella, targeting a **November 4, 2025, Town Meeting date**.
  - August deadline if voter approval is required; otherwise, September remains viable.
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## 6. Strategic Plan Focus Areas – Updates from Sub-Groups

### Communication:

- Ongoing efforts to push information to the public.
- Monthly Select Board updates will continue, delivered publicly by **Mike Pardue**.

### Financials:

- Financial discussion scheduled for **April**, pending reconciliation with Jodie.
- Will assess **cost implications** of adding one full-time personnel.

### Personnel:

- Focus Group has addressed:
  - Operational and budgetary consistencies.
  - Development of a staffing model.
  - **Goal: Minimum of eight personnel on duty daily.**
  - Transitioning from a per diem to a full-time staffing model.

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## Proposed Staffing Models:

- When **Station 2 is staffed**, the plan would allow for:
  - **Six personnel at the Corner Station.**
  - **Five personnel at Station 2.**
- Increased staffing would allow for a **third ambulance** to meet growing service demands.
- A five-year phased approach would incrementally add personnel

## Additional Considerations:

- Addressing misconceptions about **minimum staffing requirements.**
- Increased staffing would provide additional benefits, including:
  - Community outreach and risk reduction programs.
  - Potential long-term cost savings through preventative measures.
- **Community Paramedicine Program:**
  - Exploring grants for expanded paramedicine services.
  - A **Town Health Officer** role could be beneficial.
  - Local hospitals may assist with funding opportunities.
- The **Personnel Group** will present a preliminary **formal staffing model** at the next meeting.

## Facilities:

- Internal review of Station 2 housing needs.
- **Landry French Construction** will meet with Assistant Chief Gay to discuss modifications to the Corner Station.
- Significant facility upgrades unlikely within the next year.
- Awaiting a **quote for a sprinkler system** at Station 2.
  - Will check with the Chief regarding the Certificate of Occupancy process.

## Equipment & Technology:

- No major updates at this time.

## Regulatory Items & Legal:

- Ongoing **legal review** expected by March or April.

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## 6. S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Assessment

### Key Takeaways:

- Leveraging strengths while addressing potential risks—communication remains a top priority.
  - **Jim Smith** added "**Increased oversight and accountability**" as an additional strength.
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## 7. Action Items & Next Steps

- **Special edition newsletter**
  - Coordination with Seacoast Online to publish an article
  - Next meeting agenda to include:
    - Draft staffing models for review.
    - Update on SAFER Grant availability.
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## 8. Next Meeting

- **Date:** April 14, 2025
  - **Time:** 3:00 PM
  - **Location:** Wells Town Hall
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## 9. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn** made by Brian Toomey.
- **Motion passed unanimously.**